

The Selection Process

To qualify for the position of Police Officer, you must complete the following steps in the selection process:

Do you care enough to make a difference?

If the answer is "YES" then a position with the Columbus Division of Police could be for you. The responsibility associated with a law enforcement career is significant; however, there is tremendous benefit and pride in serving and protecting others. Not only will you ensure the safety of citizens, but you will also uphold the law and ensure that the rights of citizens are preserved. These responsibilities make this profession among the most important in maintaining the integrity of the laws created on the local, state, and federal levels.

The City of Columbus, Division of Police has a strong focus on the initial training as well as continuing education of police personnel. The Division of Police dedicates itself to providing the finest service possible to the citizens of Columbus. Since 1999, the Columbus Division of Police has been one of the largest police agencies in the country to be both CALEA (Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies) and ASCLD/LAB (American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors/Laboratory Accreditation Board) accredited.

Prior police experience is NOT required, so if you are ready for a rewarding career that will provide life-long skills and continue to be a challenge, please consider this career! For more information regarding this step, please visit the website of the Division of Police, at <https://www.columbus.gov/police-recruitment/> or call the Police Recruiting Unit at (614) 645-4642.

Step -1 File Application

The next step in the selection process is to file an application and Abbreviated Background Questionnaire (ABQ) with the Columbus Civil Service Commission for the Police Officer position. The requirements for filing an application are: 1) You must be at least 20 years of age at the time of application and 21 years old in order to be appointed; 2) You must be a U.S. citizen; 3) You must have a High School Diploma or GED equivalent; and 4) You must have a valid driver's license. If you have any questions please call the Civil Service Commission staff, at (614) 645-0800, or email policefiretesting@columbus.gov.

Step 2 - Testing

If your application and ABQ are approved, the Civil Service Commission will notify you of the time and place to report for the examination. The phases of the examination are: Phase I—Multiple Choice; Phase II—Writing Sample; Phase

III—Oral Board (COPE); and Phase IV—Physical Test. Phases I, II, and IV are administered on a pass/fail basis only. Candidates who pass all four phases of the exam will be placed on the eligible list wholly on the basis of their Phase III scores and approved Veteran's Preference Credit. Information sessions will be offered and we strongly urge you to attend one of these classes and familiarize yourself with the contents of the study guide. There is no appeals process for this Civil Service test.

Step 3 - Collection of Background Information

Candidates who pass Phase IV of the exam and score high enough to be processed will receive their personal history questionnaires and waivers to complete. You will then be required to appear at Police Headquarters for a pre-interview with a background investigator. Pictures and fingerprints will be completed to assist in an extensive background investigation.

Step 4 - Polygraph

Immediately following the pre-interview, you will be given a polygraph examination to verify the accuracy and completeness of all the information provided in your Personal History Questionnaire and to Police Background Investigation Section.

Step 5 - Review of File

The Civil Service Commission will review your entire package to make sure there are no violations of the [Background Removal Standards](#) for Civil Service employment with the Division of Police.

Step 6 - Background Investigation

Your background investigator will conduct a thorough check of your employment history, references, and criminal record and then conduct an interview with your spouse, significant other, or family.

Step 7 - Oral Review Board

Information is compiled concerning your background and polygraph results. This information is sent to the Oral Review Board, which consists of 1 police supervisor, 1 police officer and a Human Resources professional. This interview will consist of job-related questions and questions arising from the completed background investigation.

Step 8 – Physical Fitness Testing

Once you are scheduled for the Oral Review Board, you will then schedule to take the Ohio Peace Officer Training

Commission (OPOTC) physical fitness testing to ensure you meet the entry level fitness requirements.

Step 9 - Conditional Appointment

Oral Review Board recommendations and background investigations will be reviewed by the Police Administrative Subdivision chain of command. Summaries of each candidate will be forwarded to the City of Columbus Public Safety Director for consideration. The Safety Director will decide if you will be sent a conditional letter of appointment.

Step 10 - Post-Offer Medical & Background

This step involves additional background investigation including completion of a supplemental questionnaire and a second polygraph to address drug use questions. This step also includes a rigorous medical examination designed to evaluate your fitness. You will be given a cardiovascular stress test, drug screen and a psychological evaluation. The vision requirements state that your vision must be **correctable to 20/20 BINOCULAR** and no more than **20/125** uncorrected in each eye. You must also have **moderate color discrimination ability**. The medical exam, including vision, physical, and psychological tests, must be passed before a Final Offer of Employment is given. For more detailed information, please review the [Stress Test Training Manual](#).

Step 11 - Start Academy

Candidates, who are selected for the academy class, will be notified by letter of an appointment date for the Police Academy.

Frequently Asked Questions:

What are my chances of becoming a Police Officer?

Many individuals express interest in employment with the City of Columbus, Division of Police. Since the selection process is competitive, with a limited number of individuals that will be successful, those numbers can be overwhelming. However, the number of individuals who are truly committed to becoming a Police Officer drops dramatically. There are a great number of individuals who do not commit themselves to what is required for this process. We realize that it is a process that requires a significant time commitment; however it is an extremely important position with great responsibility that must include a rigorous selection process. When you consider this position, you should also consider the many rewards that come with this position. We encourage you to commit yourself to this process—you will NOT regret it!

How many people will be hired?

The City plans to hire a minimum of sixty police officers each year. The number actually hired may vary depending upon several factors such as the budget, the number of retirements, and the overall need of the Division of Police.

When will the next class start?

At the discretion of the Department of Public Safety, the Division typically schedules two classes each year with a minimum goal of 30 recruits per class. The decision of when to start a class depends upon several factors such as the budget, the number of retirements, and the overall need of the Division of Police.

What is the tattoo policy?

Anyone hired on or after January 1, 2010 shall be required to cover tattoos by means determined by the Division and the cost of covering shall be paid by the member. New tattoos that will be visible on any exposed body part are prohibited. Existing tattoos on the arms and legs will be photographed. Tattoos visible on the head, neck, or hands are prohibited and must be removed. Tattoos depicting obscene, gang-related, sexual, nude, extremist, racist, or otherwise offensive images are prohibited. Body Mutilations/Piercings - No visible mutilations or piercing (other than ear piercings) shall be permitted.

Important TIP!!

Keep your email and home addresses current with us!!! Nearly all of our correspondence is sent via email. You will miss important information unless your contact information is kept current with the Civil Service Commission and the Division of Police.

If you are registered at the Employment Center on the Commission's website, you may change your information at www.columbus.gov/civilservice, log into the Employment Center, and enter your new contact information under My Profile select Personal Info and make the needed changes.

The police officer selection process can take as little as six months and up to one year depending upon a number of factors such as, the City's need for new officers, the band in which the candidate is placed on the eligible list, and the time needed to complete the background process.